

2009 Damage Report Continued

by Michael Prophet



Craig Fjarlie photo

Jane and Bill Schumacher's U-37 team began the '09 season in Madison like they did in '06 and '05 at Evansville; a mess. Jean Theoret flipped *Bello's Pizza* Saturday and nearly drowned. He didn't return full-time until Evansville.

The 2009 Damage Report picks up with Nate Brown's Issaquah-based U-17 and ends with Fred Leland's U-100. One flip, gearbox snafus, and engine problems round out the report.

U-17 Our Gang Racing #0717



Ron Harsin photo

The Our Gang team spent the off season building a new lighter cowling, installing a new rudder bracket, building another turbine engine, and putting together a backup gearbox.

At **Madison**, majority owner Nate Brown said, "They had an igniter problem all weekend. While trying to fix that, we couldn't

concentrate on other areas." They were 10% low on fuel flow, which this year was 4.1 gpm, and 5% below on the N2 limit. Kip Brown and the U-17 had no major problems.

For **Detroit** the team worked on increasing fuel flow to gain the speed and still stay under the N2 limit. They damaged a propeller in 4A.

At **Tri-Cities** Nate Brown stepped into the cockpit of *West Pasco Family Dental* and qualified himself and the boat. The reason was he needed to maintain his status as a qualified driver. Nate drove in 1B Saturday then turned the wheel over to his nephew Kip Brown. Nate said, "I'm Kip's backup driver, but I'm also a backup driver for a number of other teams." No major trouble here or running as *USNW Express* at **Seattle**.



Karl Pearson photo

Kip Brown's ride started **Evansville** as the U-17 *Seal Shield*. A flip by Dave Villwock and *Ellstrom* changed the U-number when Erick Ellstrom leased the boat so they could finish the race Sunday and gain points towards the National Championship. Now running as the U-16 with Nate Brown driving (Kip Brown broke his hand during the interlude of the lease), the boat finished fourth in 3B, earning a spot in the provisional. A win in the provisional put the boat in the final as the trailer.

At **Qatar** for the Oryx Cup, Nate Brown and "Our Gang Racing" almost didn't make the start of 2B because of starting trouble. While floating in middle of the first turn, the U-17 came to life and Brown was able to join the other three boats.

In the first running of the final, the turbine in the U-17 ingested too much saltwater from *Oh Boy! Oberto* on lap 1 and Brown ground to a halt. *Formula's* flip caused stoppage of the heat; Brown was unable to start the re-run.

U-22 Webster Racing #9703

After five years of sitting on the beach, the former U-3 "Tubby" returns. Mike Webster and his crew re-powered the craft from the V-12 turbo-Allison to a turbine. They also lightened the hull, from 9,300 lbs to 7,700 lbs.

It ran as the U-22 *ServPro* at **Madison**. Before the 3A, Webster told officials they had fuel trouble, and asked to change to 3B or C, but was told no way. They failed to run in the third section, but were allowed to run a test lap after the heat section. The engine quit on the second lap, coming out of turn 2. *ServPro* was towed in, done for the day.

At **Detroit**, Webster and *Matrix Systems* finished 1A and returned to pits, he opened the canopy and it swung back down slamming onto his left hand. He was sent to Detroit Receiving Hospital for medical attention. The hatch cut his right ring finger. He returned from the hospital with his finger tip reattached, but without his finger nail. Webster said the bigger problem was, “We have gearbox problems.” The gearbox, making a loud growling noise, caused *Matrix Systems* to withdraw from the race Sunday.

At **Tri-Cities**, the gearbox in *Matrix Systems* was still growling loudly and could be heard from shore, but didn’t cause major problems. In **Seattle**, Webster withdrew *Miss Airbag Service* Sunday morning after the gearbox finally came apart.

In **Evansville** Sunday, *Matrix Systems* was forced to withdraw after 3B because a bolt in the coupler broke.

In Doha, **Qatar**, Mike Webster and *Matrix Systems* ran into trouble on the third lap of 3A when he had to shut down to save the engine. Gearbox problems again! To make things worse, their backup gearbox would not fit, knocking the team out of the first Oryx Cup.



Karl Pearson photo



Karl Pearson photo

U-25 Superior Racing Team & #0010 & #0925

Dr. Ken Muscatel leased Fred Leland’s red, white, and blue *Mirageboats* (#0010) to start the season until his new boat was completed. His new boat, costing under \$150,000, was being built by Ron Jones Jr. in Pacific, Wash. Muscatel had no major problems at **Madison**.

In 3A at **Detroit** Brian Perkins and Ken Muscatel nearly collided on the first lap. *Miss Jarvis Disaster*



Ron Harsin photo



Recovery never left the trailer for 4B. The team found engine mount problems and didn't want to risk the financial damage to the engine or hull and withdrew.

Muscatel had planned to have the new boat in the pits Lampson Pits in **Tri-Cities** Thursday evening, but they the plumbing system wasn't completed and the new purple paint not finished. The Leland hull was pressed into service one more time.

ServPro didn't run Friday because, as Muscatel put it, "The team forgot a part of the boat back in Seattle."

In 1B Saturday, Muscatel and *Servpro* went down in second turn before crossing the starting line because of problems with his seatbelt. Before the third set of heats, Muscatel withdrew *Servpro* because of a cracked strut.

Muscatel and co-owner Ron Jones brought the brand new U-25 to **Seattle**, but failed to make it in time for qualifying. So, *Buffalo Federal Savings Bank* was unable to race in their scheduled 1B Saturday. They also missed the second heat section Sunday, but were allowed in 3A and the provisional.

It suffered balance and skid fin problems. Muscatel said, "We have to get the balance right. We changed the skid fin because the first one we tried was too big; it overpowered the boat." They tried to borrow a skid fin from Fred Leland, but found the holes didn't match up.

Mister Home Loan lost its engine cowling on the second lap of 2A in **Evansville**, but Muscatel managed to finish the race.

Muscatel and Jones's boat was damaged Friday in 1A at **Oatar**,



Ron Harsin photo

forcing them to withdraw from the race. Ending the first lap, "Superior Racing" hit a roller going into the corner and bounced high in the air. When it slammed back down the engine began acting up. After returning to the dock the crew found damage to the rear non-trip. Though the bracket was fine, the support structure was broken on the inside and outside. Muscatel said it could have been patched, but another hop like that may have caused even more serious damage. He said it wasn't worth it in the long run.

U-37 Schumacher Racing LLC #9401

The Schumacher team began the '09 season on a difficult note once again. At **Madison**, Jean Theoret flipped *Miss Bello's Pizza* upside down in 1B Saturday while leading *Graham Trucking* by a roostertail charging into the first turn of the final lap.

When the rescue team arrived, Theoret was found unconscious and pulled out the escape hatch within minutes. Safety and Rescue, led by Buddy Gaw and the ABRA rescue team, continued to perform CPR until he was placed in an ambulance and transported to King's Daughters' Hospital for treatment. Theoret was considered in critical condition upon arrival. Dr. Edward Sauris soon upgraded his condition to stable, but guarded. News reports said that his injuries were not considered life threatening. After evaluation he was transported by ambulance to University

of Louisville Hospital for further observation. Bruce Madej, the director of media relations for the American Boat Racing Association said, “He ingested water into his lungs but he does not appear to have any external injuries. He was intubated, but he was responding on his own.” Jane Schumacher and Scott Raney both reported that doctors had found nothing internal or external after doing a CAT scan. Jane and Billy left Sunday morning for Louisville to be with him.

The tube connecting Theoret’s air mask to the onboard oxygen system broke and he ingested quite a bit of the Ohio River. Theoret said, “I drowned and came back to life.” He spent five days in the hospital, including two days in intensive care. They said it may take up to a month before he could return to drive. Theoret said he was part of the selection process that named J.W. Myers, 2003 rookie of the year, to replace him behind the wheel.

As for *Miss Bello’s Pizza*, crew chief Scott Rainey stayed in Madison to repair the hull damage suffered in the crash.

Theoret was in **Detroit** and team officials gave him the option of driving, but he opted out, saying, “I’m not able to drive.”

As J.W. Myers rounded the Roostertail Turn starting their qualification attempt, the propeller flew off and *Miss DYC* coasted to a stop. The propeller was seen flying through the air. Fortunately, no damage was done to the hull, and governors kept the turbine from over revving and blowing.



Craig Fjarlie photo



Craig Fjarlie photo



Karl Pearson photo

For the final, *Miss DYC* and *Albert Lee* were tied in points for the trailer position. Because of a faster qualification speed, *Miss DYC* got the spot, but declined. The boat suffered damage to the bottom and right air trap in earlier heat and was withdrawn.



Karl Pearson photo

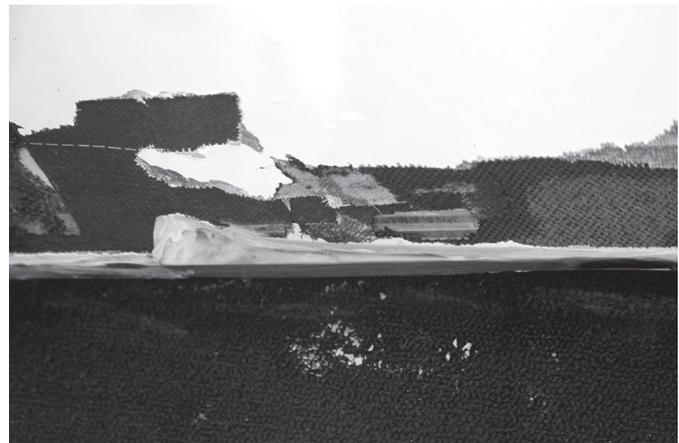
Jean Theoret was back in the cockpit in **Tri-Cities**. He took *Hoss*

Mortgage Invertors out during qualifying Saturday morning, hoping to get the doctor's clearance. On return, the first person to greet him on the dock was J.W. Myers, who drove the rest of the weekend. Asked how close he was to coming all the way back, Theoret replied, "Maybe next week."

Billy Schumacher said he didn't want to rush Theoret and was very pleased with the job Myers did in Detroit.

Jean Theoret was back behind the wheel of *Hoss Mortgage Invertors* Friday in **Seattle**. Theoret had trouble in 1A on Saturday saying, "It was my strength; I am not driving any more this weekend." J.W. Myers climbed back behind the wheel for Sunday.

Feeling better in **Evansville**, Theoret helped repair the brakes on the team transport truck on Friday. He put on his coveralls, and with a big smile climbed underneath.



Fortunately, the crew has plenty of time for repairs before the Middle East race. Photos by Ron Harsin

Renton Coil Spring suffered de-lamination on the left side near the skid fin after 3B. It was peeling along the non-trip, forcing them to withdraw.

Miss Peters & May and the team had no major mechanical trouble in Doha, **Qatar**.

U-48 Go Fast & Turn Left #9610 & #9399

Albert Lee, with Brian Perkins driving, began the season at **Madison** without any trouble.

In 1A at **Detroit**, Perkins went through a roostertail trying to make a move on Kip Brown in the U-17 and did some minor damage to *Albert Lee*.

Albert Lee returned to the pits after 2A with a broken strut. They had to move the boat out of the pit area to weld it, and finished repairs in time for 3A. Perkins and Ken Muscatel nearly collided on the first lap in 3A.

The weld on the strut came apart *again* after 4B. After *Miss DYC* withdrew from the final, *Albert Lee* got the nod, but they had problems of their own. Owner Greg O'Farrell said, "We probably shouldn't run. We've been re-

Ron Harsain photo



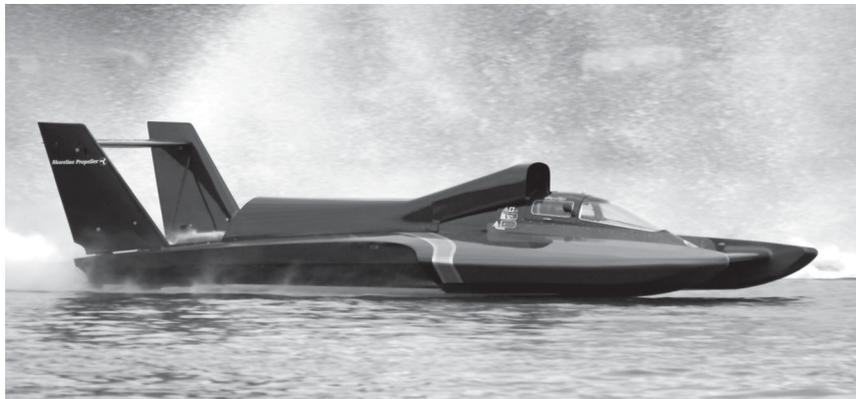
Ron Harsain photo



eventually failed completely. They had no further problems.

U-100 Leland Unlimited LLC #9899

Except for a power loss in 1A at **Madison** Greg Hopp and *Shoreline Propellers* had no major problems.



Painting went dead in the final more than once, but Hopp re-started each time and they limped across the finish line.

Jerry's Tavern went out once Friday in **Tri-Cities** and Hopp had to shut down. They changed engines after being towed in.

Hopp was one roostertail back in second place in 3B when *Jerry's Tavern* coasted to a stop. They had broken the gearbox. The provisional would have featured the U-100 vs. U-16. Hopp joked, "If we'd have had *Jerry's Tavern* ready to go, we'd have slaughtered *Ellstrom*."

Except for penalties, *Mirageboats* had no major problems at **Seattle**.

welding our strut after each heat, and we have a hole in the bottom. We'll try to run." Unfortunately, the repairs could not be done in time.

The team and *Albert Lee* had no major difficulties in **Tri-Cities** or **Seattle**. For **Evansville** O'Farrell brought out the blue #9399 and Perkins raced it as *Whirlpool*; having no major problems.

After 2A at **Osaka**, Brian Perkins said, "The count to the five to the five caught us off guard, and we barely made the heat." With the boat in the water at the five minute gun, he went to set his stopwatch and nothing happened, it went blank. He had to leave the dock with no timer. Then while milling with three minutes to go, they had radio difficulty which

In 2B at **Evansville**, Hopp was running third going into turn 2 when *Mirageboats* lost power after *USNW Express* crowded them. Hopp managed re-start and finish. The team put in a new engine right before 3B, but it didn't help, they went dead in the water.

On Doha Bay in **Qatar**, Hopp pulled up with engine problems at the end of first lap of 3A. *Mirageboats* failed to start 4B due to lack of equipment.



Chris Denslow photo

Book Review: **Dancing With Disaster**

Author: N. Mark Evans with David D. Williams, Edited by Roger Lippman Published by Pure Image Inc., copyright 2009 ISBN: 1-59001-194-3, \$24.95 Paperback. 148 pages, 75 assorted B&W photos.

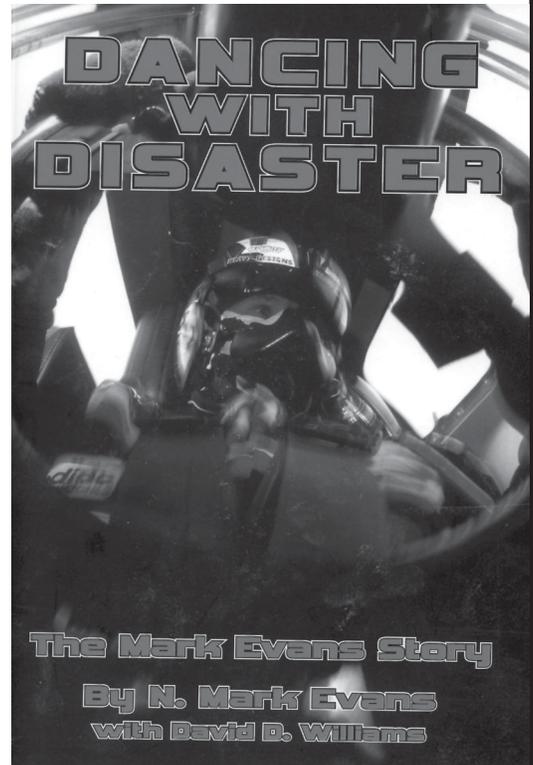
Order from publisher @ www.pureimage.com, or from the Hydroplane and Raceboat Museum Online Store, at: www.thunderboats.org.

Dancing With Disaster is the autobiography of N. Mark Evans.

The story is told to David D. Williams who also writes the introduction. Williams and Evans met back in the summer of 1979, and their lives have crisscrossed ever since.

This book is not David Williams talking; instead it's like listening to Mark Evans speaking at a dinner banquet or a casual lecture. Words are not minced in this volume, which adds to the reality of the story.

One might wonder what an unlimited hydroplane driver and dancing have to do with each other. The answer is on the back cover, in a four photo series by Stephan Lane. There's Mark, on the deck



of one of his Leland rides, doing his "happy dance" following a win!

Mark starts at the beginning, when he was born and attending his first unlimited race as a newborn, in 1957. His life story unfolds after that, in a series of short stories, some hilarious some very serious.



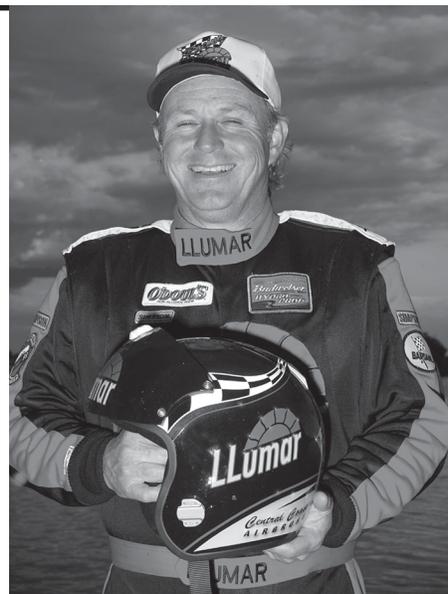
H&RM Collection

The first eighteen (short) chapters deal with his early childhood in Chelan Wash. and his constant zest for racing anything that moved.

Then in chapter 19, Dad, Norm Evans acquires an old *Notre Dame* hull & motor, that was to become the U-10 *Evergreen Roofing*. The old hull was painted Porsche Racing Green and there was enough paint to do Mark's and Mitch's pickup trucks as well. In two years of attempting to qualify at the Seattle and Tri-Cities races, they packed it in. Then comes the "ups & downs". Mark marries Linda, his first wife, and then his Father, Norm Evans was murdered, on April 11th, 1981 at approximately 9:00 am.

Then it was a job with Jim Lucero, then he got fired so more ups & downs.

Then finally the American Spirit project, followed by *Miss Exide* and eventually the *Miss Budweiser*, including a Bernie Little approved shorter haircut. Divorce from Linda came suddenly, which saddened Mark, but soon after came his ride with *E-Lam Plus* and their first win.



H&RM collection

His saying "It doesn't matter how many times you get knocked down. What matters is how many times you get back up" was certainly coming into play, by this stage of Mark's colorful life. The book ends with a chapter entitled "The Last Waltz" about his last ride with Bill Wurster and the U-8 *Llumar*.

The end of this book has Mark Evans statistics, his 100 races, his 10 wins, his four blowovers, and a photo of Mark sitting between his two ex-wives Linda and Elaine. And they're all smiling!



Robert F. Peters photo

Any fan of Unlimited Hydroplane racing should read this story. It's inspiring, sad in parts, and funny through out.

Review by: **Kirk Pagel**. Special Projects Editor for the *Unlimited NewsJournal*

Happy Times & Not So Happy Times



Steven Lane photo



Karl Pearson photo

Mark Evans doing a little jig after winning 1A at Phoenix in 1996 driving Fred Leland's U-99 *Waffle House* (#9299).

Evans wrecked the primary U-1 *PICO American Dream* (#9610) on a qualifying run at Hawaii in 1997.

Pre-Season Testing; The U-21 *Albert Lee* & U-25 *Miss Holiday Inn Express* launch on the Columbia River

Two unlimiteds tested for the coming 2010 H1 Unlimited series in Pasco 5-7. The weather was fine Friday, but the tumbleweeds in the Columbia River were countless. Quite a crowd of people showed up for the test along with photographers, reporters, and TV crews. Michael Denslow, Tri-Cities Water Follies President, and Event Director Kathy Powell also made an appearance.

The U-21 *Albert Lee* didn't hit the course until about noon, because they had trouble lining up the gearbox. The coupling for the shaft wouldn't work so they had to go to Lampson's and have one made. Once out though, Brian Perkins ran very well; *Albert Lee* looked impressive, stable, and very quick. When they returned to the dock after the first run, the crew pulled off the engine cowling to tinker on the engine without pulling it out of the water. Then shortly after, Perkins headed back out on the Columbia for another fast run. They pulled the boat out from then on to swap out equipment. They tested propeller and gear combinations the rest of day. Overall, the team was very pleased with the results. Their concern about the new gearbox slowing them down proved groundless, their un-official GPS reported speeds close to 201 mph on the straights. Driver Brian Perkins commented after returning from his day's runs "Goes fast, accelerates and turns. Everything you want a race boat to do." There is also some discussion of testing in Seattle before the season starts, according to Albert Lee III who was on-hand for the testing session.

Lakeridge Paving owner Greg O'Farrell was limping around the pits with his left leg in a soft cast. He had ruptured an Achilles tendon skiing in April. He was very happy with the performance of his new purchase, the #0721.

Dr. Ken Muscatel's remodeled (by Ron Jones Jr.), "Purple People Eater" (#0925) on the other hand didn't perform well at all. The boat showed up a couple hours after the U-21 without decals, and the crew spent most of Friday putting it together and working on the engine. Muscatel had plans to make four runs during the two day test.



Michael Peophet photo



Karl Pearson photo



Karl Pearson photo

Karl Pearson photo



final run of the day. *Miss Holiday Inn Express* didn't get very far from the dock and had to be towed back.

On Saturday the U-21 *Albert Lee* did not show, having run very successfully the day before. Muscatel's *Miss*

Karl Pearson photo



Holiday Inn Express started the day with a bang, blowing an engine trailer-firing, which ended their test session in Pasco. Muscatel said this is why we do pre-season testing. To add insult to injury, they couldn't get the boat back on tilt because of battery problems. A quick charge took care of that, though.

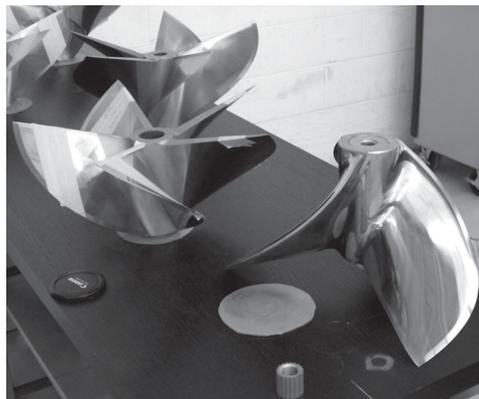
There were plans to let 5 litre pilot Jon Zimmerman get some "seat time" in the boat, but the blown engine prevented that.

A Little Taste of HydroFile Race Team News from Lon Erickson

U-10. There has been a statement made by a member of the **Gregory** family, about "hoping to be running the U-10 (#8901) at Seattle in August." No additional details are available at this time, but keep watching *UNJ* for new developments from the USA Racing Team.

U-16 . Sven Ellstrom showed *UNJ* the new propellers and high tech equipment they are using to make them. The Five Axis machines/ Mitsubishi EDM machines are able to cut the center keyway and spline out of the 13-8 stainless steel material, to within a tolerance of .00025. They are also making props for offshore racers, turbine casings, turbine disc's and blades, and other various boat/aircraft industry related parts.

U-17. Nate Brown and the Our Gang Racing Team have completed the changes to the rear wing structure and running surfaces. The hull has been primed, the bottom painted, and rolled over. A new paint scheme also is in the works. The team has been busy re-working the turbine from the Doha race and prepping gearboxes. Our Gang Racing plans on testing at the annual Tastin' 'n Racin' event, June 12-13 on Lake Sammamish in Issaquah, WA.



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